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ABSTRACT

This guide provides a detailed evaluation form, together with complete instructions for using it, which is designed to elicit answers to the following questions: (1) What features and abilities does a specific word processing program have? (2) On which computer(s) will the program work? (3) Is additional hardware/software necessary before the program can be implemented? (4) How easy is it to learn and to use the program? (5) How efficient is the program? (6) Is the program supported with good documentation, such as user manuals, tutorials, and quick reference helps? and (7) What are the major strengths and weaknesses of the program? Focus is on three major components of a typical word processor: an editor, a file manager, and a formatter. For each component, users are asked to indicate presence or absence of certain features, to amplify their yes/no responses, and to describe existing features of the program in detail. Users are then asked to evaluate each function, including findings about the ease/complexity of use, and the merits of the particular function. Finally, space is provided for an overall assessment of the program and a recommendation regarding its implementation. (LMM)

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EVALUATOR'S GUIDE

FOR

WORD PROCESSING SOFTWARE

DEVELOPED BY

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A. PURPOSE

In order to choose word processing software for the micro-computer, a prospective buyer needs answers to the following questions:

a. What features and abilities does the word processing program have?

b. Which computer(s) will the program work on?

c. Is additional hardware/software necessary before the program can be implemented?

d. How easy is it to learn and to use the program?

e. How efficient is the program?

f. Is the program supported with good documentation? (user manuals, tutorials, quick reference helps, etc.)

g. What are the major strengths and weaknesses of the program?

This evaluation form is intended to elicit answers to these questions.

B. PROCESS

Since a typical word processor consists of three major components - an editor, a file manager, and a formatter - this evaluation form focuses on each of these areas in turn. The design of each section is the same:

FIRST You are asked to indicate if certain features exist on the program you are evaluating by circling an asterisk to indicate either "yes" or "no".

SECOND Space is provided for you to amplify your "yes/no" responses and to describe those features in details: how do they operate? what is unique about them? what specific functions do they perform? etc.

THIRD At the end of each of the three sections (editor, file manager, and formatter) sections you are asked to evaluate each function. In this section include your opinions and findings about the ease/complexity of use, the merits of the particular function, etc.

Please note the distinction between DESCRIPTION and EVALUATION. In the DESCRIPTION section, be as objective as possible - simply report on the particulars of operation, the equipment manipulation required, etc. Reserve subjective comments about the effectiveness of the function, the problems encountered with use, the necessity of the functions, etc. for the EVALUATION section.

After having completed a detailed evaluation of each word processing function, you will be asked for an overall assessment of the program and a recommendation regarding its implementation.

THIS GUIDE IS DESIGNED TO ASSIST YOU IN COMPLETING EACH PHASE OF THE WORD PROCESSING EVALUATION INSTRUMENT. PLEASE REFER TO IT REGULARLY AS YOU COMPLETE THE DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION SECTIONS. ADDRESSING THE QUESTIONS ASKED IN EACH SECTION WILL AID IN PROVIDING COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSES.

C. DESCRIPTION OF THE SOFTWARE

This section will be completed by the Clearinghouse. Please feel free to add descriptions to sections that are incomplete.

DISK TITLE

The complete name and version number of the program being evaluated.

COPYRIGHT

Date of publication.

PRODUCER

The name, address and telephone number of the manufacturer of the program. If the company offers a HOT-LINE number for users who are encountering problems with the program, this is also noted.

COST

This most recent cost as provided by the publisher. (This is subject to change without notice.)

AVAILABLE FOR

The brand names of computers for which the program (or versions of the program) are designed.

SCREEN DISPLAY

The visual appearance of text as it appears on the monitor. An "x" is used to indicate whether it displays 40 characters per line, 80 characters per line, or whether other options are available.

HARDWARE/SOFTWARE

This section lists any hardware/software which may be required to run the program beyond the standard package of 48K, 1 disk drive, 3.3 DOS and a black and white monitor. Required hardware/software is that which is mandatory for operating the program (eg: an extra disk drive, a lower case adapter, an 80 column card). Optional equipment refers to additions which would increase the efficiency of the program but are not essential to its operation (eg: a 16K language card, a shift key modification).

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF PACKAGE CONTENTS

A listing of each item included with the program (length and size of reference manual, command quick-reference guide, tutorial, number of disks, etc.)

Disk Title: _____ Copyright: _____

Producer: _____ Total Cost: $_____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Telephone: _____ _____

Hot-line No: _____ _____

Available for: _____ Screen _____ 40 column only

_____ Display: _____ 80 column only

_____ Other

Hardware/Software:

Required	Optional
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

(N.B. It is strongly recommended that any program which displays in 80 column format have a high quality monochrome monitor as standard equipment. It is highly unlikely that a television or color monitor will provide sufficient resolution.)

Physical Description of Package Contents:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

II. THE EDITOR

The editor is probably the most important part of a word processing system. It is the editor which allows the user to type in text and modify it as needed. A good editor can make word processing effortless; a poor editor can be the ultimate in frustration!

DOCUMENT CREATION:

Document creation refers to the way in which a file is established on the word processing system. Generally the user decides upon margin settings, line spacing, etc. before actually beginning text entry. Some programs have built-in default values for margins, type size, etc. which will automatically be reverted to if no other user instructions are given.

Outline any built-in default functions.

Describe the process by which a document is created.

Are there length restrictions on document size?

Discuss any restrictions with regard to the naming of a file.

Does the full file name appear in the index?

EDITING:

Editing refers to the way in which recalling, inserting, deleting and changing is accomplished. In the "Descriptive Comments" section, amplify on your "yes/no" responses and include any other descriptions of the editing process you feel appropriate. Some of the questions you may wish to address are:

Does the editing process work by reference to line numbers or by cursor movement over the full screen?

How is cursor movement accomplished?

Can you get into edit mode without going through the menu?

ERROR HANDLING:

Error handling refers to the program's ability to identify procedural errors, call attention to them, and to instruct on the correction procedure. Describe how errors are depicted, what on-screen prompting is available, etc. on the program you are using. Include answers to such questions as:

Do the screen prompts differ depending upon which mode you are in?

Are commands mnemonic (memory tickling) and therefore easy to learn?

Do error messages localize errors (i.e. tell you exactly what you did wrong)?

THE EDITOR: Description

DOCUMENT CREATION:	Yes	No
Does the program have built-in defaults?	*	*
Is there on-screen verification that a document has been created?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

EDITING:		
Will the program enter and edit in the same mode?	*	*
Can you get in and out of edit mode at any stage of document preparation?	*	*
Can you backspace without erasing?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

ERROR HANDLING:		
Are errors identified by the program?	*	*
After responding to an error message, are you returned to your last typing entry point?	*	*
Are inappropriate responses disallowed? (eg: the entry of letters when numbers are expected)	*	*
Is sound used to call attention to errors?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

SCROLLING:

Scrolling refers to the program's ability to move text into the "window" of the monitor to enable proofreading, editing, etc.

Describe how scrolling is accomplished.
Which keyboard characters are used?
Can game paddles be used?
What options are available in scrolling?
Does it scroll by line?
sentence?
paragraph?
block (group of sentences)?
page?
Will it jump to the previous page?
specific page?
top or bottom of a page?
last word you typed?
Is horizontal scrolling supported?
(This movement would only be necessary if the lines in the document could be longer than the line length of the screen, for example, if you were printing a table on 8½ x 11 paper inserted sideways.)

MOVING TEXT:

Most word processing programs provide a means for moving or copying blocks of text from one place in the document to another. Some word processing packages facilitate this movement by offering a split screen feature where the monitor is divided in half (either vertically or horizontally) so that both the source and the new location can be viewed simultaneously.

Describe the process of moving words.
phrases.
blocks of material.

How much text can be moved at one time?

Is deleting done by characters?
words?
lines?
sentences?
paragraphs?
blocks?
pages?
beginning and ending markers?

If deleted material can be recovered, describe how this is accomplished.

THE EDITOR: Description

SCROLLING:	Yes	No
Does the word processing program scroll using keyboard characters?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

MOVING TEXT:

Can blocks of information be moved?	*	*
Can you move material from one file to another?	*	*
from one disk to another?	*	*
Does it offer a split screen feature?	*	*
Is there an "undo" command to reverse the last change, whether it is an insertion or deletion?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

THE EDITOR: Description

SEARCH AND REPLACE

The ability to search for a given word, a portion of a word, or a phrase and replace it with an alternative is a useful technique for correcting spelling errors, improving word usage, etc.

Does the program have the capability to search:
- forward in text?
- backward?
- up to a certain page number?
- through the entire document? (global search and replace)

Does the program search and replace words?
parts of words?
strings? (any combination of letters and/or numbers)

EVALUATION OF EDITING FUNCTIONS

Comment on the performance of each editing function:

DOCUMENT CREATION

Is the process of creating a document straight-forward and easy to learn?

If file name limitations exist, are they overly restricting?

Can default values be easily overridden?

Other comments?

EDITING

How easy/difficult is it to get in and out of edit mode?

Describe the efficiency of cursor movement over the screen.

Are the same keys redefined for different uses depending upon which mode you are in?

Is this confusing?

Other comments?

THE EDITOR: Description

SEARCH AND REPLACE:	Yes	No
Does the program have a global search and replace feature?	*	*
Does the user have the option of reviewing each case before the switch is made?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

EVALUATION OF EDITING FUNCTIONS

DOCUMENT CREATION -

EDITING -

THE EDITOR: Evaluation

ERROR HANDLING

How effective are the error messages?

How involved is the correction process?

SCROLLING

Is access to scrolling uncomplicated?

MOVING TEXT

How easy/difficult is it to insert and delete:
- words?
- paragraphs?
- large blocks of material?

Is the amount of text that can be moved at one time sufficient?

If your program offers a split screen feature, is it possible to edit in either screen with equal ease?

SEARCH AND REPLACE

Is the search and replace feature complicated/time-consuming to operate?

THE EDITOR: Evaluation

ERROR HANDLING -

SCROLLING -

MOVING TEXT -

SEARCH AND REPLACE -

III. FILE MANAGEMENT

Once a document has been entered into the computer's memory via the editor, the file manager saves it to disk or tape. Further operations such as loading a document into memory, listing the documents on a disk, copying, deleting or renaming files, and interfacing with other programs are all operations controlled by the file manager.

STORING:

Storing refers to the process of taking a document from the computer's memory (entered via the editor) and saving it on disk or tape.

Describe the process of storing a file on disk.

Which keystrokes are involved?

Is there a limit to the number of characters a file name can contain?

Can you rename a file at a later date?

Is it necessary to save a document every few minutes to guard against accidental machine turn off or power failure?

How is this done?

Does the word processing program offer text compression to maximize disk storage space?
(Text compression refers to consolidating duplicate characters - such as several blanks in a row - into a "compressed format" for storage on a disk. When the file is loaded later, these sequences can be expanded again.)

Does the word processing package allow you to initialize a disk directly without use of the system master?

Does the program remind the user to save documents?

COPYING

Copying refers to the program's ability to load a document into memory, list it, duplicate it on the same disk, or reproduce it on another disk.

Outline the procedure for copying a file.
a portion of a file.
an entire disk.

FILE MANAGEMENT: Description

STORING	Yes	No
Can a working document be stored with one or two keystrokes?	*	*
Can files be merged ?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

COPYING		
Can backup copies be made of an entire disk?	*	*
of specific files?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

FILE MANAGEMENT: Description

DELETING

Deleting refers to the process of eliminating portions of documents or entire files from disks.

Explain the safeguards to prevent accidental deletions.

Outline the process of deleting a document from the main index.

Does the program have the ability to search for key words in documents on file and delete all such documents sequentially?

Can documents be "protected" from deletion. (That is they may be coded in such a way that they will be unaffected by normal document deletion procedures.)

INTERFACING

Interfacing refers to the program's ability to communicate with other programs. Some programs do not interface at all, some will interface with other software providing it is written for the same computer, and still others can interact with all software, regardless of the system it was written for.

Often a program's ability to interface is dependent upon its use of standard file format. Some word processor programs use non-standard format for files, either to provide more efficiency, to provide for special purpose capabilities, or to protect the software from being illegally copied. There is nothing wrong with this - provided the package is to be used only for word processing. If the file manager supports a standard file format, however, (one which can be accessed by a high level computer language such as BASIC) then the editor can be used to type in program, text documents, or to interface with the other software packages.

(If you are unfamiliar with computer languages and/or file storage methods, it may be necessary to refer to program documentation to provide answers to questions posed in this section.)

If the program is designed to be compatible with other existing packages (such as proofreading programs, spelling checkers, graphic packages, electronic spreadsheets, data bases, mail merge programs, etc.) list the specific program it will support.

Is a special routine necessary to enable it to read files written on another computer system?

Will the word processing package permit you to create files that can be transmitted over telephone lines to another computer?

In which format are files saved? (as binary files? text files? etc.)

FILE MANAGEMENT: Description

DELETING	Yes	No
Is there protection against accidental deletion of files?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

INTERFACING		
Does the program provide for interfacing with other software?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

FILE MANAGEMENT: Description

SECURITY

Security refers to the program's ability to limit access to the computer to designated individuals only.

If the program requires a password before you can log on to it, describe how it is assigned.

Are there restrictions on what can be chosen as a password? (eg: numbers only? symbols disallowed? limited character length? etc.)

Can it be changed?
reviewed? (if you have forgotten which password you used)

Can a number of people have access to the program under different passwords?

Will the program allow partial access (eg: to enter or read information) without giving access to all the information contained on the file?

FILE MANAGEMENT: Description

SECURITY	Yes	No
Is access to data restricted through the use of passwords?	*	*
Is this security optional?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

EVALUATION OF FILE MANAGEMENT

STORING
COPYING
DELETING

- Evaluate the efficiency with which documents are loaded, listed, saved, copied, or deleted.
- Are the number of keystroke operations involved acceptable? excessive?
- How easy/difficult is it to learn and remember the process?
- How time consuming is the process?

INTERFACING

If documents are not saved in standard file format, are there any advantages/disadvantages to the particular way in which they are filed?

Describe the flexibility/limitations with which the program can be made to interface with other software packages.

SECURITY

Is the operation of the security system overly cumbersome in normal classroom use?

EVALUATION OF FILE MANAGEMENT

STORING -

COPYING -

DELETING -

INTERFACING -

SECURITY -

IV. PRINT FORMATTER

The job of the printer formatter is to accept the edited document from memory or disk and create a typewritten result on the printer. The formatter molds the text into the form desired by the user through the use of special commands which regulate spacing, margins, indentation, pagination, justification, etc.

MARGINS

Margins regulate the length of text lines.

Describe the process(es) by which margins are set.

Can margins which are frequently used be stored in memory and instantly recalled?

If the user is not emplying word wrap or right justification, is there an audible tone to alert the user when text has been entered beyond a certain point?

Is reformatting (changing margin length, spacing, etc.) done globally?
by page?

Does a change in margin settings require a realignment before they are effected?

TABULATIONS

Tabulations, which enable you to move to a designated point to begin typing, are useful when typing columns, tables, enumerations, etc.

How are tab stops set?
cleared?
used?

Describe any special tab stop features available.
Eg: - decimal alignment
- left justification
- right justification

PRINT FORMATTER: Description

MARGINS	Yes	No
Are there built in margin sets?	*	*
Can these be user set?	*	*
Can you reformat at any point without loss of text?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

TABULATIONS		
Are there built in tab stops?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

PRINT FORMATTER: Description

INDENTATIONS

Negative indentations refer to the first line of a paragraph being typed at the left hand margins and subsequent lines being typed 3, 5 or 10 spaces to the right of the margin.

Describe the process of setting both positive and negative indentations.

CENTERING

The ability to automatically center titles, displays, etc. is a time-saving convenience built into most word processing programs.

Will the word processing program automatically center:
over a column?
over more than one column?
from the right hand margin?

How is this accomplished?

Describe the process by which multi-column documents are produced.

PRINT FORMATTER: Description

INDENTATIONS

	Yes	No
Are there preset paragraph indentations?	*	*
Can the program accommodate negative indentations?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

CENTERING

	Yes	No
Does the word processing package have an automatic centering feature?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

PRINT FORMATTER: Description

LINE SPACING

A word processor's ability to vary line spacing may be dependent upon both program specifications as well as the sophistication of the printer with which it is used. Please confine your descriptions of spacing ability to those inherent in the program itself. (If you have access only to a low-quality printer, you may have to rely on documentation when completing this section.)

Describe the word processor's ability to quarter space.
half space.
single space.
double space.
triple space.

Does it accommodate proportional spacing?
(A different amount of space is allocated for each character depending upon its width.)

JUSTIFICATION

Justification refers to a word processor's ability to insert or delete spaces to allow perfect letter alignment at a specified point(s).

Must the decision to justify be made before any text is entered?

Can it be made at any point in the program?

How is justification accomplished?
- by inserting extra spaces between words?
  characters?
- by incremental spacing
  (print carriage moves in very small steps or increments resulting in improved appearance and a very even right hand margin)

Will the program accommodate the justification of several columns of text such as is used in a newspaper column format?

PRINT FORMATTER: Description

LINE SPACING	Yes	No
Will the program accommodate variable line spacing?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

JUSTIFICATION		
Will it justify horizontally, resulting in aligned left/right margins?	*	*
Will it justify vertically, resulting in even top and bottom margins?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

PRINT FORMATTER: Description

PAGINATION

Pagination refers to a program's abilty to automatically decide where to begin printing a new page given the margin settings, number of lines to be typed per page, etc.

Does this program paginate automatically?

Can this feature be disabled?

Will it print page numbers?

On any location on the page?
(eg: upper right corner? lower left corner? top centered? bottom centered?)

After major alterations have been made, is repagination automatic or must it be done manually?

Can you indicate that certain pages begin only on specified even or odd page numbers if desired?
(eg: if you always wanted a new chapter to begin printing on the right hand page)

Does it offer "widow protection"?
(A widow is a portion of a paragraph, usually only the first line or two, which may appear at the end of a page, with a remainder of the paragraph appearing on the top of the next page. This is considered undesirable - widow protection would ensure that if only one or two lines were available for printing, the entire paragraph would be moved to the next page.)

Can the widow protection feature be disabled?

WORD WRAP

Word wrap refers to the ability of a program to prevent the splitting of words across line boundaries. This means that as you type, should the last word on a line not fit (as is usually the case), it will automatically be moved to the beginning of the next line.

Does the word wrap work automatically in conjunction with insertions and deletions?
(ie. if changes are made in the initial portion of a paragraph, will subsequent lines be automatically adjusted to account for this insertion/deletion, or does an additional command need to be invoked to justify subsequent lines?)

PRINT FORMATTER: Description

PAGINATION	Yes	No
Will the program automatically paginate?	*	*
Will it print page numbers sequentially?	*	*
Will it print headers?	*	*
footers?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

WORD WRAP		
Does the program offer word wrap?	*	*
Can you disable this feature?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

PRINT FORMATTER: Description

HYPHENATION

Some word processors will print text exactly as it is entered, some will word wrap within the specified margins, some will combine word wrap with justification, and still others will improve the justification process even further with the use of a built-in hyphenation algorithm and/or exception dictionary.

If the word processing package offers hyphenation, is it pre-determined (ie. hyphenation is automatically invoked on each and every document) or is it user set? (You can determine whether you wish hyphenated words to appear in the document.)

Does the program distinguish between compound words and hyphenation?

SCREEN DISPLAY

A very useful capability of a word processor is its ability to run the document through the formatter and place the output on the monitor exactly as it will appear on the printer.

Does the program show exact printout appearance including:

justification?	centering?
boldfacing?	upper and lower case?
underlining?	single/double/triple spacing?

special characters (eg: subscripts, superscripts?)

An extremely important consideration in all forms of editors is how they handle **upper/lower case.** Some keyboards do not allow case discrimination with the shift key. Various schemes can be used to get around this:

- one is to assume that all letters entered are lower case and require that upper case be preceded by a special character. These two character sequences are replaced with upper case letters when the document is run through the printer.
- another way is to designate a special key on the keyboard (such as ESCAPE) as the shift key and represent upper case characters on the screen with inverse video.
- yet another way is to install an upper/lower case character generator chip.

Describe the way upper/lower case letters are shown on the screen.

Reverse field viewing refers to the option of having your screen document appear either as dark lettering on a light background or as light lettering on a dark background - a useful feature in averting eye fatique.

If the word processing package offers this option, describe how it is activated.

A **display of available memory space** is a useful function in that:

1. It allows the user to reserve a specified amount of blank space on each disk to allow for later additions/changes to documents.
2. It enables the user to guard against having a document (especially a long one) divided between two disks.

If the program offers display of memory space used/available, is this
a constant, ever-changing display?
an accessible display through menu?

PRINT FORMATTER: Description

HYPHENATION	Yes	No
Is there provision for hyphenation?	*	*
Is the user given the option of deciding whether to hyphenate a word and where?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

SCREEN DISPLAY		
Does the monitor show the exact printout appearance of the full page?	*	*
Are upper and lower case letters shown in typical typewritten format?	*	*
Can the screen display be converted to reverse field viewing?	*	*
Is there a display of available memory space?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

PRINT FORMATTER: Description

BUFFERING

A buffer is a computer's temporary storage zone. Text is initially entered to the buffer zone - changes, insertions and deletions are made -and then the document is saved in permanent storage.

Describe the program's buffering capability.

Is additional hardware recommended to increase the program's buffer zone? Describe.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Special features refers to any extra "niceties" which may be unique to a particular word processing package. Examples:

A. Keeps

If illustrations or diagrams are to be added after a document is typed, space must be left for them. This space is called a "keep". Keeps can be as simple as skipping a few lines or as complex as allowing text to "flow" all around a rectangle in the middle of a page.

If the program offers keeps, how is space reserved?

Will it automatically print references to illustrations and/or footnotes on the same page as the item to which it refers?

PRINT FORMATTER: Description

BUFFERING	Yes	No
Does the program permit you to keep entering information while other operations (eg: storing, printing) are going on?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

SPECIAL FEATURES

A. Keeps

Will the formatter reserve space for pictures, diagrams, etc. to be added at a later time?	*	*
Is footnote information automatically printed on the page on which it is referenced?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

PRINT FORMATTER: Description

B. Counters

If several numbered paragraphs appear in a document, a formatter with counter capabilities will assign these numbers sequentially so that insertions or deletions will not require extensive hand renumbering.

Describe the program's counter capacity.

How are counters activated?

Are counters automatically reset to zero at the end of each file or must they be manually reset?

C. Table of Contents/Indices

A computerized word processing package is well suited for compiling an index or a table of contents from key words embedded in the text.

If the program offers this option, describe how it is activated.

PRINT FORMATTER: Description

B. Counters	Yes	No
If several numbered paragraphs occur in a document, will the formatter assign numbers sequentially?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

C. Table of Contents/Indices		
Will the program compile a table of contents or index from key words embedded in the text?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

PRINT FORMATTER: Description

D. User Defined Keys

A user defined key is a collection of text, format information, or both which can be collected under a single keystroke. Whenever this key is entered into the text, it is replaced with the text and formatting commands it represents.

Describe the process by which user defined keys are established.

Is there a limit as to how many can be invoked?

E. Special Character Keys

Special character keys refer to a word processor's ability to print symbols/characters other than those included on the keyboard (eg: currency symbols, foreign alphabets).

How are special character keys assigned?

How are sub/superscripts entered?

PRINT FORMATTER: Description

D. User Defined Keys	Yes	No
Does it have an autotype feature for common words and phrases?	*	*
for user-defined commands?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

E. Special Character Keys		
Is there provision for typing special symbols which may be available on the printer but are not a regular part of the keyboard (eg: math symbols, super/subscripts)	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

PRINT FORMATTER: Description

F. Type Forms

To improve the clarity and appearance of a document it is often useful to have access to a variety of type styles.

If the program allows for the use of a variety of print styles (italics, elongated type, etc.), how is this accomplished?

by switching fonts?

(ie. typing print instructions which will cause the style of type to be changed without the necessity of adjusting the printer)

by instructing the printer to pause to allow a switch of daisy wheels, elements, etc.?

G. Built-ins

Some word processing programs have extra features built in to extend their capabilities or to improve their efficiency and editing ability.

Describe any extra capabilities the word processor has to offer.

If the program has a built-in dictionary, how many words does it contain?

Can this be added to?

To what limit?

How do you program the personalization of a form letter?

Is there a built-in computation program which automatically adds columns of figures?

PRINT FORMATTER: Description

F. Type Forms	Yes	No
Does the program allow for printing in different type styles?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

G. Built-ins		
Does it have a built-in proofreading/spelling package?	*	*
dictionary?	*	*
form letter?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

PRINT FORMATTER: Description

PRINTING OPTIONS

The appearance of the final printed document is achieved both by the constraints of the word processing program and by the quality of printer that is used. When describing printed output, attempt to limit your comments to the printing options controlled by the word processing package itself. However, if the package is designed to work with a certain standard of printer only (Qume, Diablo, etc.), be sure to indicate this.

Describe the keyboard operations necessary to initiate the printing process.

Can the printer be stopped and reactivated to resume printing?

Is the option of printing a rough draft document available? (Perhaps with line numbers for easy reference in editing.)

Can it be set to show revisions from previous printed editions?

How is this shown:

- by highlighting the changed area?
- through the use of revision bars printed in the margins?
- by overstroke? (Text to be revised is printed out with a hyphen through the characters. Eg: The defendant filed a motion for Rearraignment ~~in which both parties participated~~ and on July 18, 1983 the trial court denied the motion.)

Can it be set to print galley as opposed to page?

(A "galley" is a continuous stream of text which is later cut and pasted-up into pages for reproduction.)

Will it print horizontal and vertical lines?

Is there provision for priority printing?

Is the option of spooling provided?

(Being able to print several files one after another.)

PRINT FORMATTER: Description

PRINTING OPTIONS	Yes	No
Will it print selected pages only?	*	*
a range of pages?	*	*
Can it be set to stop printing between pages?	*	*
Is it possible to abort printing at any time?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

EVALUATION OF PRINT FORMATTER

MARGINS

TABULATIONS

INDENTATIONS

CENTERING

SPACING

Evaluate the efficiency of the process by which margins, tabs, indents, centering, and spacing are set.

How easy/difficult is it to set, change or clear:

- margins
- tabs
- indentations
- centered headings
- spacing, etc?

EVALUATION OF PRINT FORMATTER

MARGINS -

TABULATIONS -

INDENTATIONS -

CENTERING -

SPACING -

PRINT FORMATTER: Evaluation

SCREEN DISPLAY

Comment on user reactions to the display available.

Is resolution acceptable?

Are screen formats uncluttered?

If embedded control commands are used (code of messages that tell the printer what to do), do these make it difficult to get the format right the first time?

BUFFERING

Is the buffer zone adequate in size?

SPECIAL FEATURES

If the program offers built-in computations (eg: automatic totalling of a column of figures), is this an advantage or a liability?

PRINTING OPTIONS

Are there any limitations to printing?

Is the process of showing revisions adequate?

If the package does not show revisions, is this a handicap?

How efficient is the spooling process?

PRINT FORMATTER: Evaluation

SCREEN DISPLAY -

BUFFERING -

SPECIAL FEATURES -

PRINTING OPTIONS -

PRINT FORMATTER: Evaluation

JUSTIFICATION

How appealing is the final justified product?

PAGINATION

If headers/footers are not available, is this a limitation?

WORD WRAP

If word wrap cannot be disabled, does this pose problems when you are trying to place data in fixed positions on a line?

HYPHENATION

Is the hyphenation process satisfactory?

PRINT FORMATTER: Evaluation

JUSTIFICATION -

PAGINATION -

WORD WRAP -

HYPHENATION -

V. DOCUMENTATION

REFERENCE MATERIALS

The amount and type of documentation a word processor has will often have a tremendous bearing upon the ease with which it is learned and used.

DESCRIPTION

Describe the documentation that is included with the program in terms of

- type (a reference manual? a step-by-step tutorial? a demonstration or training disk?)
- length
- inclusion/absence of pictures and examples

Does it have a table of contents?
an index?
glossary to define technical terms?
trouble-shooting document?

Does the documentation correlate with the disk?
(Does it have examples on disk which clarify the description of operations?)

Are user tests provided?

Is there a written policy on updates?

EVALUATION OF DOCUMENTATION

Are user support materials comprehensive?
well-organized?
sequentially developed?

Are there sufficient illustrations?
pictures?
examples?

Is text layout pleasing?
sufficiently spaced?

Does it use frequent titles and subtitles?
logical chapter divisions?

Is the rate and order of presentation appropriate?

If a training disk and/or tutorial is available, is it comprehensive?
sufficiently detailed?

DOCUMENTATION: Description

REFERENCE MATERIAL	Yes	No
Is reference material provided for user training?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

EVALUATION OF DOCUMENTATION

VI. EASE OF IMPLEMENTATION

EASE OF USE DESCRIPTION

Use this section to describe any aspects of the program not specifically addressed in earlier parts of this instrument which facilitated/hindered acquisition of word processing skills. Amplify on any of your "yes/no" responses and add any other comments or observations about the program which affected its implementation. Some questions you may wish to address are:

How many students did you use the program with?
in what setting?
at what grade level?
in which subject area?

What was the initial start-up time for students?
How long did it take for them to use all aspects of the system? (Outline observations made of student users as well as comments made by students themselves.)

Can one disk be used to boot a number of computers to enable simultaneous use of the word processing program by several students?

EASE OF USE EVALUATION

When evaluating the ease of use of a word processing package, two distinct areas need to be addressed:

1. problems encountered in learning the program
2. problems encountered in using the program

Please discuss each of these areas both in terms of:

- your learning and use of the system
- your student's initial learning and subsequent use of the program

Describe anything about this program which helped/hindered the acquisition of skills.

Do students require a minimum of supervision when using the program? Why or why not?

Does the program involve a minimum amount of equipment manipulation?

Can the disk be used by a person with a minimum of computer competency?

Are user support materials adequate?

What could be altered to make them more effective?

Is the operation speed (for editing, printing, accessing different modes, etc.) acceptable?

Is the program reliable in normal use?

Is the program relatively easy to learn? Why or why not?

How does the courseware correlate with the new Business Education curriculum? (Does it suite particular modules? Does it fulfil specific goals?)

EASE OF USE	Yes	No
Can upper/lower case be accomplished without keyboard modifications?	*	*
Is there a caps lock mode available?	*	*
Can you get screen help whenever it is needed?	*	*
Is there a management system built in (perhaps showing log on time/elapsed time per document created)?	*	*

Descriptive Comments:

EASE OF USE EVALUATION

VII. SUMMARY

Up to this point you have described and evaluated specific functions of the program you are evaluating. Now look at the program as a total package and make an overall assessment of its major strengths and weaknesses.

Ask yourself "Would I like to use this package on a daily basis with my students? Why or why not?" Then make note of those salient aspects of the program which you particularly liked (its easy-to-remember commands, the fact that it took only minutes to begin producing documents, the usefulness of particular functions, etc.) and those you disliked (the editing process was very complicated to use, the storing process was very slow, the documentation was sketchy, etc.) Record the prominent strengths and weaknesses you discovered, briefly explaining each one.

MAJOR STRENGTHS OF THE PROGRAM

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

MAJOR WEAKNESSES OF THE PROGRAM

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

VIII. RECOMMENDATION

After reviewing the word processing program you are asked on the basis of your overall assessment of the package to make a recommendation as to what status the program should be given.*

PRESCRIBED LEARNING RESOURCES are those "learning resources approved by the Minister as being most appropriate for meeting the majority of goals and objectives for courses, or substantial components of courses, outlined in provincial Programs of Study."

RECOMMENDED LEARNING RESOURCES are "those learning resources approved by Alberta Education because they complement Prescribed Learning Resources by making an important contribution to the attainment of one or more of the major goals of courses outlined in the provincial Programs of Study."

> Evaluators do not have to make the recommendation as to whether courseware should be given prescribed or recommended status - checking this blank simply indicates that in your opinion the word processing program edits, stores and prints in a satisfactory manner and is worthy of serious consideration for adoption by the Curriculum Committee.

If you check the "Prescribed" or "Recommended" category you are in fact saying that you, as a business teacher, would be pleased to use this word processing program in its present form to train your students for business entry. A program in this category may have minor flaws in operation (eg: complex keystroke operations may be required to activate certain commands), but in total:

1. It is capable of producing virtually any document that may be required by the average business.

2. It has a good modular fit with the new Business Education curriculum.

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* NB: Teachers who have had experience on Dedicated Word Processing Systems

The word processing programs available for microcomputers vary widely in performance and cost. None of them will give the micro user all the capabilities of a $15,000 stand alone system. If you have had experience using one of these dedicated machines, you may be disappointed in the performance of even the best of the programs for personal computers. Bear in mind that this is a general purpose, low cost machine that allows you to accomplish many different tasks - word processing is only one of them! The dedicated word processors were designed specifically for the job and provide many extras, including function keys, that are not available on microcomputers. When designating program status, please bear in mind the limitations of a computer (in terms of memory, keyboard layout, etc.) as opposed to a dedicated word processing system.

SUPPLEMENTARY LEARNING RESOURCES are "those additional learning resources identified by teachers, school boards or Alberta Education to support courses outlined in provincial Programs of Study by reinforcing or enriching the learning experience."

Checking this category indicates that the range of potential use of the program may be somewhat limited, but what it does cover, it covers effectively. It may be a useful program for a quick introduction to word processing, but because of the lack of certain features (for example, no global search and replace, no provision for indenting, inability to justify, a small buffer zone which limits movement of text, etc.) its potential application is limited.

These programs may be excellent however for personal use programs or for use by Language Arts students who are using the word processor for preparation of paragraphs, reports, letters, etc. The program's limited command structure makes it easy to learn and it does provide valuable exposure to word processing concepts.

REJECTION indicates that the program has little, if anything, to contribute to achieving the goals of the provincial Programs of Study.

A program would fit this category if its documentation was so poor that it required constant teacher supervision to enable students to use it; if its commands were so complex that the average student would have difficulty mastering them, if the program did not work according to specifications, etc.

I recommend that _____ this disk be evaluated further to determine the full nature of its potential use (Prescribed or Recommended)

_____ this disk be considered for "Supplementary" use in the classroom

_____ this disk be rejected

I agree that the copyright to this report rests with Alberta Education and confirm that no attempt was made to copy or modify the program or the accompanying documentation.

Name of evaluator: _____
(Please print)

Date: _____

Signature: _____